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REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS*

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. As evidenced by all too many examples of constant threats to and violations of the basic rights of individuals around the world, the human rights situation continues to be a daunting challenge for the international community. Considerable progress must yet be made in order to secure the realization of human rights standards and a firmly established human rights culture. The ideals that inspired the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are as relevant today as they were nearly half a century ago when the community of nations pledged to promote universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Bearing this in mind, collective efforts must be made on the part of all human rights actors to uphold these aspirations and to implement fully the mechanisms that ensure their effective realization.

2. The United Nations human rights programme, under the direction of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, is making notable advances in promoting the objectives of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III), which serves as a blueprint for action in the international efforts to promote and protect human rights. During the last year, important progress has been made in expanding the ratification of international human rights instruments, supporting the establishment or strengthening of human rights national institutions and broadening technical cooperation projects. These efforts have yielded positive and concrete results.

3. An important feature of the High Commissioner's agenda has been the strengthening of human rights work in the field. As Governments increasingly seek human rights assistance in situ, the United Nations human rights programme is able to reach out to more people and bring tangible results to the numerous and urgent needs in this regard. This serves as further proof of the spirit of cooperation that more and more symbolizes how human rights are being addressed today.

4. Similarly, the High Commissioner has assertively sought to secure that economic, social and cultural rights, and particularly the right to development, acquire a higher profile within the framework of United Nations human rights efforts, in the spirit of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, which proclaimed that all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated.

5. During his tenure, the High Commissioner has encouraged Governments and other human rights actors to attach to the consideration of human rights greater prominence and stature. Through dialogue with Member States, through coordination with the United Nations agencies that support human rights efforts, through permanent contact with regional forums, academic institutions and the leadership of the main international financial institutions, the High Commissioner has sought to ensure that the issue of human rights become a constant in the thinking and actions of the political and economic forces that govern or influence events globally.

6. The United Nations human rights programme is indeed ambitious and must be implemented through partnership. Member States and others are aware of the various obstacles that have been surmounted to accomplish what thus far has been achieved. However, more needs to be done to achieve further progress. The High Commissioner is firmly determined to work closely with all partners in order to ensure these objectives.

7. It should be recalled that human rights, together with peace and security, and development, constitute the triad upon which the United Nations was founded. Member States should entrust the High Commissioner with invigorating the human rights programme in order to maintain the strength of this triad and to preserve the fundamental role envisioned for human rights by the founders of the United Nations. This should be carefully reflected upon as both the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the five-year review on the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action draw near.

8. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action provides the guidelines for the United Nations human rights programme. The methods and means being implemented are reflected throughout the present report. However, detailed information concerning the ways in which the recommendations adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights are being put into effect is also contained in other reports dealing with human rights submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session.

II. COOPERATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

9. The following fundamental principles continue to be the basis of the High Commissioner's activities aimed at enhancing international cooperation in the field of human rights: (a) the primary responsibility for the promotion and protection of human rights rests with Governments; (b) the promotion and protection of all human rights is a legitimate concern of the international community; (c) the international community should foster processes leading towards a better implementation of human rights and the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law, and should take all necessary measures to prevent human rights abuses and to eradicate the gravest human rights violations; (d) the international protection and promotion of human rights is effective only if based on the principle of the indivisibility and equal value of all human rights - civil, cultural, economic, political and social, including the right to development; (e) the interdependence between democracy, development and respect for human rights, underlined by the World Conference on Human Rights, offers a prospect of harmonious national and international activity; (f) the international and regional systems of human rights protection are complementary and should support each other; and (g) national institutions, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and grass-roots initiatives should be fully accepted as natural human rights advocates and partners in international cooperation for human rights.

A. Cooperation with Governments

10. The High Commissioner has continued his dialogue with Governments for the promotion and protection of human rights, both at United Nations Headquarters and during country visits. The main focus of this dialogue is to achieve concrete results by speaking frankly and openly about human rights issues and stirring actions necessary to guarantee their enjoyment by all people. Encouragement and persuasion have proved to be effective tools that the High Commissioner can use to achieve results. While the High Commissioner's visits to countries are promotional in nature, he takes up human rights problems encountered at the domestic and international level, including specific issues relevant to the human rights record of the country visited. During his dialogue with Governments, the High Commissioner also pays particular attention to the cooperation of Governments with the United Nations human rights programme and its machinery, including treaty-based bodies and special rapporteurs, as well as other mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights. Perceiving his role as that of a facilitator, the High Commissioner does not intend to replace any of the existing organs. On the contrary, he is paving the way for the visits of the special rapporteurs, representatives or experts, following up on the recommendations made by human rights organs and bodies. The High Commissioner also encourages and facilitates the ratification of international human rights treaties and assists Governments in the form of expert advice, technical assistance, cooperation and development of human rights infrastructures. In order to achieve these goals, preparation for the visits embraces not only consultations with the Government concerned, but also with United Nations agencies and programmes, human rights machinery, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations.

11. Since the last session of the General Assembly, the High Commissioner has undertaken official visits to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Gabon, Indonesia and Tunisia. 1/

12. From 27 to 30 July 1996, the High Commissioner visited Gabon, where he met with the President of the country and other senior government officials. Topics of discussion included the ratification process, the analysis of present legislation to ensure that it conforms to international standards, the actual preparation of reports for the various United Nations human rights treaty bodies and the development of a comprehensive programme of technical assistance and cooperation. The proposed programme of cooperation would include the provision of training courses for relevant government officials, police, gendarmerie, the armed forces, parliamentarians and non-governmental organizations. More emphasis on follow-up, including the periodic review of the measures taken as a result of meetings with Governments, such as in the case with Gabon, will further elevate the role of the High Commissioner's visits in the promotion and protection of human rights.

B. Cooperation with United Nations agencies and programmes in support of human rights

13. At this time, when Member States are considering how to improve the action of the United Nations, it is vital that United Nations agencies and programmes enhance their cooperation in the field of human rights and in this way optimize the results of their efforts. The High Commissioner's aim is to facilitate this process through establishing channels of information in the field of human rights, enhancing exchange of relevant expertise and undertaking joint projects. In the framework of the preparations for the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration, the High Commissioner proposes to other agencies and programmes a system-wide concentrated action for promotion of human rights, aimed at preventing human rights emergencies from continuing or occurring and assisting countries in transition. Consultations should be carried out, inter alia, in the framework of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to identify means and methods to achieve such results.

14. A growing number of examples prove that inter-agency cooperation brings shared advantages and contributes to a better output for the United Nations. Agreements of cooperation, signed between the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Volunteers and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as well as others under preparation, provide an effective framework for inter-agency cooperation. The High Commissioner wishes to acknowledge the vital contributions that are being made for the cause of human rights by United Nations agencies. Their input to this report is also greatly appreciated.

15. UNICEF is providing valuable assistance in the formation and activities of coalitions for children, made up of Governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society. These efforts have produced concrete actions in terms of legislation reform, establishment of monitoring mechanisms, dissemination of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the inclusion of human rights education in school curricula. UNICEF supports the participatory role of families in the protection of children's rights. The memorandum of understanding between UNICEF and the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights provides a functional framework for the cooperation between the two institutions, aimed inter alia at the support for the Committee on the Rights of the Child and activities in the field.

16. UNESCO focuses its activities in the field of education for human rights on evaluating and strengthening national policies and plans, developing educational

material and reinforcing specialized networks. Examples of this work can be seen in the collaboration with the Société française pour le droit international for the preparation of a document on teaching programmes and ongoing research in the field of human rights at the higher education level. Furthermore, UNESCO Chairs on Human Rights, Democracy and Peace (presently 19 at universities in Africa, Europe, Arab States and Latin America) promote an integrated system of research, training and information activities and facilitate subregional and regional cooperation between researchers and teachers. In addition, the Associated Schools Project, covering over 3,500 schools in nearly 130 countries contribute significantly to the promotion of international understanding and values protected by human rights.

17. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) cooperates with the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights in a number of areas. Chief among these is the close working relationship between the field staff, inter alia, in the former Yugoslavia, where UNHCR is providing information for the human rights reports prepared by the Special Rapporteur. Also, in Rwanda, UNHCR and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights operate under a memorandum of understanding outlining areas of cooperation, in particular with respect to monitoring of the situation of returnees in detention and conditions for return of refugees. Finally, in terms of training, UNHCR offered some of its experienced officers to brief staff of the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights on various aspects of field missions. This approach was welcomed by the High Commissioner in the light of his plans to expand the human rights field presence.

18. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) strongly advocates capacity development for governance. This offers a natural context for activities of immediate relevance for human rights. UNDP projects aim at strengthening democratic institutions and processes, judicial systems and parliaments. Assistance is also provided for developing institutions specifically concerned with human rights, in which cases UNDP works in cooperation with the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights.

19. In the aftermath of the World Conference on Human Rights, the World Health Organization (WHO) is giving increasing attention to many areas of human rights as they affect the health sector, a development reflected in the designation of a senior staff member, at the Assistant Director-General level, as focal point for human rights. WHO is now increasingly using the concept of health security in both the health policy and human rights contexts. It is perceived as encompassing the principle of universality in health care, so that all human beings may live with the knowledge that they can seek health care which is accessible, affordable, relevant, and of the requisite quality. Health security covers all aspects of the right of every individual to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including the right to food in sufficient quantity and of good quality, the right to decent housing and to live in environments where known health risks are controlled, and the right to have access to education and information on health, rights that are enshrined in the various international treaties. In due course, WHO (in conjunction with its many partners) is going to consider to develop proposals for consideration by the treaty bodies on how the "right to health security" might be used in reporting on and monitoring the implementation of article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and corresponding articles in other treaties.

20. Powerful and compelling ideas for a reinforced WHO role in the field of human rights have emanated from two high-level bodies set up in pursuance of

resolutions adopted by the World Health Assembly: the Task Force on Health in Development and the Global Commission on Women's Health. WHO is currently engaged in a concerted effort to take up the challenges posed by the recent conferences at Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing. An action plan on human rights has been developed and will be implemented when resources become available.

C. Cooperation with regional forums

21. The intergovernmental regional organizations are important and close partners of the United Nations human rights programme. Cooperation with these organizations is crucial in the planning and implementation of the United Nations human rights activities. Working relations have been established with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Commission of the European Communities, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights continues to facilitate the step-by-step process of establishing regional human rights machinery in Asia through, inter alia, the organization of the annual regional workshops and by according priority to the needs of the countries of the region. Detailed information in this regard is contained in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights" (A/51/480).

22. The High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights provides financial support to the African Commission on Human and People's Rights under the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation. It supported the First Regional Conference of African National Human Rights Institutions (see also para. 27 below) and, in cooperation with OAU and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECE), organized a meeting of high-level government experts in the Africa region concerning ratification of human rights treaties and reporting on their implementation (see also para. 117). The technical cooperation project in the field of human rights for Burundi is being implemented in cooperation with the observer mission of OAU in that country. The High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights has also cooperated with OAU in the development and implementation of a training programme on human rights, democracy and the rule of law for heads of military academies in Africa. On 21 October 1996, the High Commissioner took part in the ceremonies for the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, that took place in Mauritius. At this occasion, he held discussions with the OAU representative and with the Chairman of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, and on the ways and means to heighten cooperation and joint projects between United Nations human rights programmes and the African Commission.

23. Cooperation with OSCE is being developed in Bosnia and Herzegovina in connection with the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreements, in some of the countries members of the Commonwealth of Independent States and in Latvia and Moldova. It includes training provided by the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights and projects aimed at the establishment of national capacities in the field of human rights, including national institutions. The High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights and OSCE hold consultations on a regular basis concerning technical cooperation projects and exchange of information.

24. The High Commissioner cooperates with the European Commission in the context of programmes for Rwanda, Burundi and Colombia. The European Commission has provided 31 highly qualified personnel, fully equipped, who are working as an integral part of the United Nations Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda

and also agreed to provide financial support to the High Commissioner for his preventive human rights initiatives in Burundi. The Commission declared its willingness to make available financial support for five staff members of the office to be established in Colombia by the High Commissioner.

D. Cooperation with national institutions

25. National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights have been recognized by the international community as particularly important in ensuring the implementation of human rights at the national level. They are frequently an effective supplement to, and if necessary, corrector of State organs. They can also bridge the gap that frequently separates the most vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals from traditional means of protection. Therefore, one of the most rapidly expanding areas of activity of the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights is the work being undertaken to create or strengthen independent national institutions. They can be one of the most important mechanisms for safeguarding all human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development.

26. The World Conference on Human Rights, the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights (in its resolution 1996/50 of 22 April 1996) have called for assistance to be provided to national institutions. The interest of countries in obtaining such advice and assistance is growing rapidly. It will therefore be necessary to involve, to a larger extent, external specialists in the area, and widen cooperation with other United Nations agencies and programmes to support the national initiatives aimed at establishing and strengthening national institutions.

27. Assistance in establishing national institutions in Latvia and Moldova, the provision of advice concerning legislation to establish national human rights commissions in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Georgia and Nepal and new projects to establish institutions in countries such as Papua New Guinea, are some examples of work currently under way. Significant support has also been provided for national institutions cooperating with each other at the regional level - particularly in Africa and in the Asia-Pacific region. The High Commissioner/ Centre for Human Rights assisted the National Commission of Human Rights and Freedoms of Cameroon in organizing the First Regional Conference of African National Human Rights Institutions from 5 to 7 February 1996 at Yaoundé. This was the first regional initiative in the area of national institutions in Africa and was attended by representatives of 12 national institutions. A decision was taken to create a Coordinating Committee of African National Institutions. Frequently, creation of and assistance to national institutions is closely coordinated with other agencies and organizations.

E. Cooperation with academic institutions

28. The High Commissioner cooperates closely with academic and research institutions. The Technical Cooperation Programme in the field of human rights increasingly benefits from this cooperation, both institutionally and by inviting experts to participate in specific projects. Since the last report, overall cooperation agreements have been signed with the Strasbourg International Institute of Human Rights (France) and the Andean Commission of Jurists (Peru). An agreement was also signed with the Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights, the purpose of which was to create stand-by

human and logistical resources for human rights field activities carried out by the High Commissioner.

29. It is a positive development that more and more institutions seek consultations with the High Commissioner with regard to their research and educational plans. This helps to put topical issues for the United Nations human rights programme on the agenda of researchers and students. The coming months will see a number of seminars organized in various regions, focusing on practical aspects of the international promotion and protection of human rights. Cooperation with academic institutions should, however, be further extended. Their potential should be more effectively utilized in United Nations human rights efforts. This can happen through better exchange of information, more joint initiatives bringing together human rights institutions from different regions, comprehensive response of the United Nations human rights programme to observations and conclusions made by academia, and, finally, through direct involvement of academic institutions in the implementation of United Nations human rights projects. The new branch, "Research and the Right to Development", of the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights should facilitate those plans.

F. Partnership with non-governmental organizations

30. In his previous reports, the High Commissioner has stressed that partnership with civil society, especially with the non-governmental organizational community, is fundamental to the human rights programme. The restructuring of the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights will give even more impetus to this partnership. Various organs and bodies recognize that they would not have been in the position to appropriately cope with their tasks without data provided by non-governmental organizations. In its resolution 1996/22, the Commission on Human Rights once again recognized the important role played by non-governmental organizations in the effective implementation of all human rights instruments and encouraged the exchange of reliable information between treaty bodies and such organizations. Sessions of working groups on indigenous populations and on minorities have proved the importance of creating United Nations forums for debate on important human rights issues with the participation of non-governmental organizations.

31. The High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights carries out close consultations with non-governmental organizations in the context of programming human rights activities, country visits, meetings of the United Nations human rights organs, and reaction to human rights violations. In Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, the offices of the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights work closely with non-governmental organizations on projects for human rights promotion and education. Regular discussions are held with non-governmental organizations in other field offices as well. The overall objective, strengthening civil society, is pursued on a country-by-country, regional, interregional and global basis, through the provision of assistance to national non-governmental organizations in the form of training courses on human rights, fellowships and support of appropriate projects developed by them. The United Nations human rights programme has been working in partnership with non-governmental organizations on the development of materials for training of non-governmental organizations on capacity-building.

32. The High Commissioner deeply appreciates the attention paid by non-governmental organizations to the United Nations human rights programme and the activities of his Office. Non-governmental organizations organize meetings or present studies to discuss relevant matters with the High Commissioner. The

partnership of the United Nations human rights programme with non-governmental organizations should be further promoted and made more effective, including through participation in the implementation of technical cooperation projects.

III. GIVING EFFECT TO HUMAN RIGHTS

A. Implementation

33. The importance placed on strengthening the implementation of human rights worldwide by the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights, country and thematic special rapporteurs, working groups and treaty bodies has never been more clear. The globalization of human rights as seen by their growing relevance for overall development trends worldwide, prompts the international community to perceive making human rights a reality as one of its primary concerns. This attitude is strengthened by developments in countries that have recently chosen the challenging way to sustainable development through democracy and human rights. Already these countries are beginning to enjoy the benefits of this policy in the form of economic progress, political consolidation, and social stability. Although the adoption of legislation consistent with international standards is of utmost importance, it is the application of law which matters most.

34. The debate during the fifty-second session of the Commission on Human Rights has confirmed the overwhelming trend to human rights, democracy and development in the contemporary world. Adopted resolutions and decisions refer to positive developments in the current world human rights record. International exchange, promoted and facilitated by human rights organs and bodies, contributes to efforts made by Governments and civil society. The value of the expertise of others, be it international organizations, Governments, non-governmental organizations or local communities, cannot be overestimated.

35. However, as in previous years, the Commission continued to express its concern about (a) obstacles to the enjoyment of all human rights by all; (b) serious human rights violations, and (c) difficult human rights situations in a relatively large number of countries. Again, the Commission in its resolutions drew the attention of Governments, the United Nations system and the general public to these issues. The Commission called for action with regard to impunity; racism and xenophobia; discrimination against women; ethnic and religious intolerance; mass exoduses and refugee flows; armed conflicts and terrorism and the lack of the rule of law as major obstacles to human rights. The Commission continued to alert the international community to extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; torture and enforced disappearance; arbitrary detention; violence against women, children and vulnerable groups; the problem of internally displaced persons, extreme poverty and problems related to sustainable development, international debt, etc. Under the agenda item related to the question of violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in any part of the world, with particular reference to colonial and other dependent countries and territories, the Commission expressed its concern about the human rights situation in Afghanistan, Burundi, Cyprus, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Haiti, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Myanmar, Nigeria, the Papua New Guinea island of Bougainville, the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), Rwanda, southern Lebanon and the Western Bekaa, the Sudan and Zaire. Furthermore, the Commission adopted the Chairman's statements on the situation of human rights in Colombia, Liberia, East Timor and the Republic of Chechnya of the Russian Federation. Under agenda item 4, the Commission considered violations of human rights in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine, human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan, and Israeli settlements in the occupied Arab territories, and under agenda item 9 the situation in occupied Palestine and the question of Western Sahara. In

addition, various thematic procedures, in their reports to the Commission, pointed out serious human rights problems in a number of countries and made recommendations in that regard.

36. Concern continues to be expressed by the Commission on Human Rights when Governments either deny or fail to lend their full cooperation to the Commission or its mechanisms. Similarly, the Commission expressed concern in its resolution 1996/70 of 23 April 1996 with regard to continued reports of intimidation and reprisals against private individuals and groups who seek such cooperation. The High Commissioner shares those concerns.

37. Many human rights activists raise the problem of infringements upon their personal security and freedom of action. In this context, the High Commissioner supports endeavours aimed at the finalization of the draft declaration on the right and responsibility of individuals, groups and organs of society to promote and protect universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 1996/81 of 23 April 1996, urged an open-ended working group to make every effort to complete work on this draft declaration.

38. The High Commissioner raises issues related to the implementation of human rights in his dialogue with Governments, stressing the need for consideration of the recommendations adopted by the Commission and made by its mechanisms. It is to be pointed out that in many cases the response of Governments indicates their willingness to react constructively to the voice of the international community. The High Commissioner regrets that his appeals do not always bring expected results. In keeping with his mandate and guided by his responsibility to promote and protect human rights for everyone, the High Commissioner will continue to take up particular cases and, if appropriate, use direct contact with Governments, and other relevant parties, in order to obtain concrete results.

B. Preventive and responsive action

39. The development of means which would prevent human rights violations takes a prominent place among priorities of the United Nations human rights programme. These two objectives, namely, stopping gross violations of human rights, including providing means for relief and redress, on the one hand, and averting the threat of such violations and thus sparing people from suffering, on the other, are being pursued by similar methods. The potential of these means can thus be used in a flexible manner.

40. The international community has strongly advocated that preventive measures should be at the heart of human rights activities. Through training, assistance in national programmes and monitoring, much can be achieved to prevent difficult human rights situations from degenerating into catastrophic situations. Strengthening preventive human rights activities is wise not only in human terms but also in economic terms. By way of example: the annual cost of the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda was equivalent to the expenses for the activities of a single day of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR).

41. The High Commissioner emphasizes the need for greater accountability for human rights violations as an indispensable dimension of preventive strategy. It is encouraging to note that settlements of crises increasingly include recommendations related to human rights and the responsibility of the

perpetrators for their violations. The Dayton Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina was a recent example. Rejection of impunity, an establishment of truth commissions and of a permanent international penal jurisdiction, should not only respond to the common sense of justice, but are examples of measures which would contribute to the reduction of violations of human rights. A permanent international criminal court would be a missing link in international law.

C. Transition to democracy

42. The United Nations human rights programme is continuing to assist countries in transition to democracy, the great majority of which are among the beneficiaries of the technical cooperation programme. An example of the work being done in this area can be seen in the transition process in Malawi where an office of the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights was established in January 1995. Through this local representation, the technical cooperation programme assists the Government and provides ongoing advice and assistance aimed at building national capacities to promote and protect human rights. Earlier in 1996, the Office provided key assistance to the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights and Democracy, enabling it to adopt Malawi's first ever Human Rights National Plan of Action. The Office also recently provided human rights training for police, military and prisons personnel. A number of other States in the subregion have also requested technical assistance in the field of human rights. The technical assistance and advisory services have also been provided to the countries in transition from Eastern and Central Europe. The Office is working in close cooperation with UNDP not only in Malawi but also in the entire region.

D. Technical cooperation programme

43. The technical cooperation programme in the field of human rights, democracy and the rule of law is a fundamental part of the United Nations human rights programme. It offers constitutional and legislative assistance; human rights support to parliaments; human rights training for United Nations peacekeepers; assistance in strengthening the administration of justice (including human rights training for the legal profession, police and prison officials); assistance for the establishment of independent, effective national human rights institutions; assistance for the conduct of free and fair elections; and support to non-governmental organizations and civil society. A full account of the programme and its various components can be found in the relevant report of the Secretary-General to the Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/1996/90).

44. Comprehensive review of the activities of the programme has enabled the High Commissioner to develop the following policy orientation: the programme should focus on countries or regions in transition to democracy; priority consideration should be given to requests for cooperation with respect to programmes that strengthen national capacities for the promotion and protection of human rights as well as programmes addressing mandates emanating from the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action and United Nations legislative bodies, such as the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights, national plans of action, and national institutions; priority is also given to technical cooperation projects responding to the needs of less developed countries.

45. The rate at which new requests for assistance are being received from Member States indicates that the technical cooperation programme will continue

to expand. The programme must be strengthened still further to enable it to meet the challenges of such growth. Important efforts were made during 1996 to improve the management of the programme, including training of staff and dialogue with all programme partners. Special efforts have been made to fully realize the High Commissioner's commitment to economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development and to integrate a gender perspective. Expertise and assistance of the United Nations agencies and human rights bodies can be of great support in these areas.

46. Funding for the technical cooperation programme is provided under the regular budget of the United Nations with additional financial support being provided by the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights (established in 1987 pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1987/38 of 10 March 1987 and Economic and Social Council decision 1987/147 of 29 May 1987). The Voluntary Fund has to date received more than $18 million in pledges and contributions. It should also be noted that specific projects are occasionally funded and/or co-funded by other agencies and programmes of the United Nations system. Steps have been taken to ensure efficient management of the resources - of the Voluntary Fund. Additional information on the management of the Fund, including the development of strict and transparent project management rules, can be found in the aforementioned report of the Secretary-General.

47. In accordance with his mandate to consolidate and coordinate system-wide efforts for the provision of human rights technical assistance, the High Commissioner regularly consults with the United Nations agencies and programmes involved in technical cooperation activities - including financial institutions such as the World Bank and development agencies such as UNDP. It should be stressed that the integration of human rights - including the right to development - into the full range of United Nations technical cooperation activities, offers the best means of ensuring a climate, at the national level, in which human rights can be respected and protected. The High Commissioner will facilitate this integration process.

E. Human rights education

48. By resolution 49/184 of 23 December 1994, the General Assembly proclaimed the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). It welcomed the Plan of Action for the Decade submitted by the Secretary-General (A/49/261-E/1994/110/Add.1, annex) and requested the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights, in cooperation with UNESCO, to coordinate the implementation of the Plan of Action.

49. The progress made towards the fulfilment of each of the components of the Plan (assessment of needs and formulation of strategies; building and strengthening human rights education programmes at the international, regional, national and local levels; developing and coordinating the development of human rights education materials; strengthening the role of the mass media; and promoting the global dissemination of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) is illustrated in detail in the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the preliminary reports of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the implementation of the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (A/51/506), presented pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/177 of 22 December 1995.

50. The Decade for Human Rights Education is a challenging undertaking for all the members of the international community. The insufficient human and financial resources constitute a major obstacle to the implementation of the Plan of Action. The full implementation of the Plan of Action and the success of this Decade will require a stronger commitment on the part of the international community and the availability of more human and financial resources to support efforts towards global human rights education.

IV. FIELD WORK IN HUMAN RIGHTS

A. Introduction

51. Human rights field presence, either in the form of field operations or field offices, is one of the major innovations in the implementation of the human rights programme in recent years. There is a variety of forms in which field presence is manifested, ranging from one professional staff office, such as in Malawi, to an operation in Rwanda involving more than 120 staff. In some countries, the human rights presence has been established as an autonomous project, in others it supports a broader United Nations involvement as in the case of the human rights programme for Abkhazia, Georgia. In some cases the operations integrate assistance and monitoring functions, whereas in others they are mandated exclusively in the area of technical assistance. This flexibility of the human rights field presence is one of its strongest assets. The experience already gathered proves that the effective implementation of human rights is greatly facilitated by activities in situ. Therefore, the programme has moved a long way from the time when human rights problems were dealt with exclusively in meeting rooms and from behind desks in Geneva and New York, to addressing them in the areas where they occur. Whereas in 1992 there were no human rights field activities, the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights now carries out eight of them. In addition, others, including Abkhazia, Georgia, and Colombia, are under preparation. More staff is deployed in the field than in New York or Geneva. It can be said that the United Nations human rights programme has gained a new dimension, one which will be an important part of its future.

B. Field activities in progress

1. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

52. The High Commissioner supported the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the implementation of a three-point programme, presented during the Peace Implementing Conference in London, on 8 and 9 December 1995, which includes: (a) training for international personnel: officers of the International Police Task Force (IPTF) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, officers of the United Nations civilian police in the region of Eastern Slavonia in Croatia; and OSCE human rights monitors who were to be deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina; (b) assisting the High Representative, who is responsible for civilian aspects of the peace implementation, with a limited number of human rights experts who, inter alia, provide legal expertise regarding universal international human rights law and its relationship to European legal instruments and, ensure that cases of human rights violations are presented to appropriate international authorities, as well as provide advice on the drafting guidelines for human-rights and election monitors; and (c) continuing support to the work of the Special Rapporteur and the expert in charge of the special process dealing with missing persons in the former Yugoslavia.

53. The High Commissioner visited Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from 6 to 11 May 1996. During this time, he met with the heads of State, prime ministers and other high-level State authorities, as well as with the representatives of various international organizations active in the field, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions.

The High Commissioner reviewed the performance of the United Nations human rights field presence in the cities of Sarajevo, Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Zagreb, Vukovar (eastern Slavonia), Belgrade and Skopje.

54. Since November 1995, the Special Rapporteur, Mrs. Elisabeth Rehn, has conducted numerous missions to the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The Special Rapporteur presented a comprehensive report on the situation in the countries of the region to the Commission on Human Rights on 14 March 1996 and a special report on human rights and the elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 17 July 1996. An update on overall human rights developments will be submitted to the General Assembly in November 1996.

55. Mr. Manfred Nowak, expert member of the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances, in his report to the Commission in March 1996 (E/CN.4/1996/36), emphasized the problem of mass graves in Bosnia and Herzegovina and called upon the parties and the international community to intensify efforts to clarify the fate of the missing using every possible means, including exhumations of mortal remains where necessary. This proposal was endorsed by the Commission in its resolution 1996/30 of 19 April 1996. Limited resources have been provided to the Expert for the development of an ante-mortem database, to provide information necessary to facilitate the identification of bodies exhumed from mass graves. Resources have also been received for a short-term United Nations resident team of forensic experts, and for a project to retrieve mortal remains in the area of Srebrenica, which was carried out following an initiative of the Special Rapporteur.

2. Burundi

56. The implementation of the project to establish a 35 staff member observer mission in Burundi encountered financial difficulties. However, owing to voluntary contributions, particularly that of the European Commission, the High Commissioner was able to deploy five human rights observers in the Human Rights Field Operation in Burundi as of 19 April 1996. The observers are continuing to gather testimony and information on allegations concerning incidents, massacres, murders, enforced disappearances and arbitrary arrests or detentions. The visits to detention centres and prisons enabled the observers to take stock of the alarming prison conditions caused by overcrowding, cramped quarters, health problems and spread of contagious diseases. At the request of the Burundian authorities, the Operation is currently finalizing an important judicial assistance project.

57. From 1 to 17 July 1996, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Burundi, Mr. Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, carried out his third mission to the country (see A/51/459, annex). He has stressed that hundreds of thousands of people had been killed, including women, children and elderly. He noted a general lack of safety and that the country was mired in a climate of fear, hatred and exclusion. Impunity poisoned human relations and jeopardized initiatives aimed at lifting the country out of its present situation.

58. In July 1996, the High Commissioner addressed a letter to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of States Members of the United Nations providing observations and conclusions drawn up from the recent evaluation by the observers currently in situ. He requested the Member States to support an increase in the number of human rights observers in Burundi as planned. The High Commissioner is grateful to those Governments that have responded by contributing to the voluntary

funding of the operation. These contributions have made it possible to add four human rights observers to the Human Rights Field Operation in Burundi. Nevertheless, the financial and logistical resources available are far from sufficient to enable a significant increase of the number of mission staff, and to plan operations over a period of a year, or, at the very least, six months. Consequently, the High Commissioner reiterates his appeal for financial and logistical support to allow him to continue the activities he has undertaken, and to increase the number of human rights observers as envisaged (see also para. 109 below).

3. Cambodia

59. In 1994, the United Nations human rights programme established an Office in Cambodia to manage the implementation of a technical cooperation project. In February 1996 the High Commissioner paid a second visit to Cambodia, where he signed with the Minister of Foreign Affairs a two-year memorandum of understanding with the Government of Cambodia for the implementation of human rights technical cooperation activities.

60. The Centre for Human Rights in Cambodia represents the broadest human rights technical cooperation programme currently under way, maintaining offices in Phnom Penh in the provinces of Siem Reap, Battambang and Kompong Cham. The programme is being implemented with the full cooperation of the Government of Cambodia. In the framework of the memorandum of understanding, the Centre continues to provide the Government, the Parliament, the judiciary and non-governmental organizations with technical cooperation, in particular in the field of human rights education and training. Educational programmes cover the school system, the judiciary, the police, the army, and civil society. UNESCO, UNDP, UNHCR, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the European Commission, as well as bilateral intergovernmental programmes, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and international non-governmental organizations greatly contribute to human rights education. The Centre assists the judiciary, the Inter-Ministerial Committee responsible for the preparation of reports under the international human rights conventions as well as the local non-governmental organization community in the framework of more than 50 human rights projects. Jointly with UNDP, the Centre has implemented a project, funded by UNDP, aimed at judicial assistance and support to the National Assembly and its Human Rights Commission in particular.

61. The Cambodian Constitution, as well as human rights and humanitarian law conventions ratified by Cambodia, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, establish the protection of the right to life that must be respected by all actors. The High Commissioner launched on 3 October 1995 an appeal in favour of the respect for the right to life, to which no derogation can be accepted, in accordance with article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. He reiterated this appeal during his February 1996 visit to Cambodia.

4. Rwanda

62. As it enters its third year of operation in October 1996, the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda continues to build on a strong working relationship with the Government of Rwanda at various levels. By the beginning of 1996, the Operation had succeeded in establishing offices in all 11 prefectures, including a new prefecture (Mutara) in the north-east of the country. The outgoing Head

of the Operation, Mr. Ian Martin, has been able to strengthen the Operation significantly and to help chart its future course. Mr. Javier Zuñiga (Mexico) replaced Mr. Martin on 23 September 1996.

63. With the withdrawal of UNAMIR on 8 March 1996, the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda remains the largest United Nations presence in Rwanda. It is essential that the international community stand behind its commitment to the Government and people of Rwanda to ensure that the Operation mandate is fully implemented. The Operation has played the major role in human rights protection and promotion in Rwanda through: investigation of past violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, including the genocide; monitoring and reporting on current human rights violations in cooperation with local authorities; confidence-building measures to facilitate the return of refugees and to enable the rebuilding of civil society; provision of technical cooperation to rebuild the administration of justice, to permit effective prosecution of individuals for past human rights violations; and contribution to the release of detainees who may have been arrested and detained without proper legal grounds. The Operation has become an example for the effective United Nations implementation of international human rights standards in the field as part of the international community's post-conflict peace-building efforts. Undoubtedly, the experience gained through deployment of the Operation will benefit similar operations conducted under the auspices of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Detailed information is available in the High Commissioner's report on the Operation (A/51/478, annex).

64. From the initial phase of the Operation, special efforts were made to provide the Special Rapporteur with the required assistance in the fulfilment of his mandate. As the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda became fully operational and as field information increased, a Coordinator for the Special Rapporteur was selected in conformity with the Special Rapporteur's requirements, whose functions form an integral part of the Office of the Chief of the Operation in Kigali.

65. The High Commissioner is grateful to those Governments that have contributed to the voluntary funding of the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda, and to the European Union, which has provided a fully equipped team of human rights field officers, integrated into the Operation. The High Commissioner was very gratified that the support by the European Union has been renewed and hopes that the number of contributed officers will be augmented to the 50 envisaged from the outset.

5. Zaire

66. After consultations held pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1995/69 of 8 March 1995 and 1996/77 of 23 April 1996, the protocol to the agreement between the Government of Zaire and the High Commissioner was signed at Geneva on 21 August 1996. The agreement foresees an office in Kinshasa with two human rights experts, who will monitor the situation of human rights and provide advice to the governmental authorities as well as to non-governmental organizations.

67. The Special Rapporteur, Mr. Roberto Garreton, has conducted two missions to Zaire and presented comprehensive reports to the Commission on Human Rights at its 1995 and 1996 sessions (see E/CN.4/1995/67 and E/CN.4/1996/66. Following the deterioration of the situation of human rights in the region of North Kivu (eastern Zaire), the Special Rapporteur conducted a mission to the region from

6 to 13 July 1996, and was also able to inquire about the situation of 13,000 Zairian Banyarwanda Tutsi refugees in Rwanda. The Special Rapporteur expressed his concern about the violent conflicts in eastern Zaire, both North and South Kivu, and about the application of the Zairian law of nationality of 1981, which could deny a group of Zairians their nationality, thereby violating their human rights. The report on his mission (E/CN.4/1997/6/Add.1) will be considered by the Commission at its fifty-third session in 1997.

C. Field activities in planning

1. Abkhazia, Georgia

68. Annex I to the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia (S/1996/284 of 15 April 1996) outlines the objectives of the Human Rights Programme for Abkhazia, Georgia, to be carried out by the High Commissioner in cooperation with OSCE in Abkhazia, as follows: promoting respect for human rights; protecting the human rights of the population of Abkhazia in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; contributing to a safe and dignified return of refugees and internally displaced persons; and reporting on human rights developments in conformity with United Nations and OSCE practices.

69. The High Commissioner, in accordance with paragraph 4 (b) of annex I to document S/1996/284, plans to open the office of the Human Rights Programme for Abkhazia, Georgia in Sukhumi in cooperation with the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). The High Commissioner will deploy one or two human rights officers and OSCE will deploy one. The implementation of the Programme is pending the final financial and structural decisions by the competent United Nations bodies.

2. Colombia

70. In a statement of 23 April 1996 on the situation of human rights in Colombia, the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights requested the High Commissioner to proceed, upon the initiative of the Government of Colombia and the identification of adequate sources of financing, to establish at the earliest possible date a permanent office in Colombia to assist the Colombian authorities in developing policies and programmes for the promotion and protection of human rights and to observe violations of human rights in the country, making analytical reports to the High Commissioner. From 19 to 21 August 1996, representatives of the Government of Colombia and of the High Commissioner reviewed, in Geneva, the provisions of the draft agreement concerning the office in Colombia. Agreement was reached on most of the substantial elements defining the mandate of the office, its objectives, as well as the general criteria and its functions. The High Commissioner has been in close consultations with the European Commission in order to identify adequate sources of financing for the establishment of the office. Likewise, the Government of Spain has also made an important financial contribution to this initiative.

V. CHALLENGES TO HUMAN RIGHTS

A. Equality and non-discrimination

1. Elimination of racial discrimination

71. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/91 of 20 December 1993, in which the Assembly proclaimed the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights organized a seminar to assess the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, with particular reference to articles 4 and 6. The seminar was held at Geneva from 9 to 13 September 1996.

72. In his introductory statement, the High Commissioner focused on the discrimination of immigrants, refugees and ethnic minorities and the propaganda of racism and anti-semitism through the modern media, including the Internet. The participants expressed their concern about the use of media for the dissemination of racist ideas and incitement to acts of violence and stressed the necessity of a vigorous action, at the international and national levels, against such phenomena. In relation to the Internet, the seminar suggested that the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights hold a further seminar in cooperation with Internet Service Providers to discuss how to prevent racist information on the Internet. The seminar strongly underlined the importance of education as a significant means of preventing and eradicating racism and racial discrimination and of creating awareness of human rights principles, particularly among young people, and recommended to States parties that they take measures in that regard.

2. Women

73. In its resolution 1996/22 of 19 April 1996, the Commission on Human Rights welcomed that the persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies had emphasized that the enjoyment of human rights by women should be closely monitored by each treaty body within the competence of its mandate, and recommended that the reporting guidelines adopted by each treaty body should be amended to identify gender-specific information that should be provided by State parties in their reports. Subsequently, the treaty-based bodies are in the process of revising or preparing new sets of guidelines taking this recommendation into account. On the basis of analysis of gender-related data in State reports, the Division for the Advancement of Women is continuing to formulate methodologies by which the treaty-based bodies might systematically and routinely incorporate a gender perspective in their monitoring activities.

74. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, visited Poland in May 1996, to study in-depth the causes and consequences of the issue of trafficking and forced prostitution of women in the eastern European region. This visit was in accordance with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 50/167 of 22 December 1995 on traffic in women and girls.

75. In July 1996 the Special Rapporteur on violence against women visited Brazil on the issue of domestic violence against women. The Special Rapporteur submitted to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-second session a framework for model legislation on domestic violence to be considered by Governments (E/CN.4/1996/53/Add.2).

76. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women will jointly organize in December 1996 a round table on ways in which the recommendations of recent world conferences concerning women's reproductive and health rights might be integrated into the human rights monitoring and reporting procedures. All six treaty bodies will be invited to be represented at the round table.

3. Children

77. The implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child represents the greatest hope for the future of children, particularly for the world's one billion poor children. The Convention, the most widely ratified human rights treaty, deserves great support as the clear expression of what the international community has adopted as standards for the treatment of children. Only a handful of countries have yet to ratify the Convention.

78. In 1995, the High Commissioner outlined a precise strategy to support the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. This strategy could serve as an example of how similar support to other treaty bodies could be provided, making it possible for them to carry out their own responsibilities more effectively. Through this plan of action, the High Commissioner is seeking to provide the Committee with the resources necessary to strengthen its monitoring activities and for the implementation of its recommendations: staff, database and information sharing, and cooperation with the relevant United Nations programmes and agencies, in particular UNICEF.

79. In his address to the World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held at Stockholm from 26 to 30 August 1996, the High Commissioner expressed the hope that global awareness of crimes committed against children would strengthen action taken towards ending them. He proposed four concrete ways to achieve change: the participation of children themselves in campaigns to end their exploitation, thereby increasing the children's own awareness of their rights; making adults familiar with children's rights; legal reforms to protect children and to punish violators of children's rights; and cooperation at all levels to combat the problem of commercial sexual exploitation. The Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, Ms. Ofelia Calcetas-Santos, visited the Czech Republic on the issue of the sale of children and child prostitution and pornography.

80. In follow-up to specific recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, a mission to formulate a project on the administration of juvenile justice was undertaken by the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights in Viet Nam in March 1996, with the participation of a member of the Committee. A needs assessment mission on the same subject took place in July 1996 in the Philippines, also following a recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

4. Minorities

81. At its meeting from 30 April to 3 May 1996, the Working Group on Minorities considered and adopted recommendations on the following issues: the promotion and practical realization of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities; the examination of possible solutions to problems involving minorities, including the promotion of

mutual understanding between and among minorities and Governments; and the recommendation of further measures for the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (see E/CN.4/Sub.2/1996/28).

82. In his introductory statement, the High Commissioner welcomed the growing commitment of the international community to the protection of minorities. A programme of international activities should focus on the translation of international standards into domestic law and practice and embrace, inter alia, a worldwide campaign for the promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities; education on rights of persons belonging to minorities and the creation of a climate of tolerance and understanding between different communities; setting up commissions for community relations to reinforce existing intergroup understanding.

83. The High Commissioner organized an inter-agency consultation on minorities on 21 August 1996 in Geneva. The rationale for the consultation was to exchange information on minority-related activities, to share ideas and to discuss future collaboration in the field of minority protection. Welcoming this initiative, the participants decided to continue their consultations on a regular basis.

5. Indigenous people

84. The international community renewed its commitment to the economic, social and cultural well-being of indigenous people and the full enjoyment of their rights by proclaiming the period 1995-2004 as the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. Within the framework of the Programme of Activities as adopted by the General Assembly in the annex to its resolution 50/157 of 21 December 1995, the Advisory Group of the Coordinator of the Decade developed guidelines and a questionnaire for the submission of requests for financial assistance from the Voluntary Fund for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. It recommended that the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights give priority to the following proposals: to organize a second international workshop on the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations; to develop a fellowship programme to provide indigenous people with training and practical experience in the field of human rights and the United Nations system; to sponsor, in conjunction with UNESCO, a human rights training programme for official delegates of the Governments of Peru and Ecuador and indigenous representatives from those countries; and to provide technical support for an information workshop on the draft declaration of the rights of indigenous peoples, as proposed by the Government of Fiji. Finally, it recommended that the necessary assistance should be provided to the implementation of an indigenous project aimed at establishing a Central and East Africa regional office for indigenous peoples. The information workshop in Fiji has already taken place while the other projects are currently being developed.

85. From 24 to 28 March 1996, the Government of Canada hosted a land rights seminar held at Whitehorse, Yukon, where a discussion on the negotiation process and legal arrangements for the demarcation, titling and protection of lands took place. It was recommended that the United Nations and its specialized agencies should consider providing technical assistance to States and indigenous people to contribute to the resolution of land claims.

86. The fourteenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations was held from 29 July to 2 August 1996 and attracted 721 participants. It focused

part of its deliberations on the issue of health and, in this regard, cooperated closely with WHO. The ideas and suggestions brought forward will, where possible, be incorporated in the WHO programme.

87. In its resolution 50/157, the General Assembly recommended that, with regard to the issue of the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations, the Secretary-General undertake a review of the existing mechanisms, procedures and programmes within the United Nations relating to indigenous people, and report to the Assembly at its fifty-first session. Although the findings of the review are encouraging (see A/51/493), it is clear that there is a lack of adequate procedures and mechanisms. The High Commissioner considers the question concerning the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations system to be one of the core issues in relation to the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. The dialogue on this issue will continue during the second workshop that will be hosted by the Government of Chile.

88. The High Commissioner calls upon the international community to recognize, protect and promote the rights of indigenous people in order to achieve full participation of this sector of the population in political, economic and social life at all levels of society. It is essential that this participation be based on full respect for languages, cultures, traditions and forms of social organization of indigenous people.

6. People infected by the human immunodeficiency virus

89. The High Commissioner organized in conjunction with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) a Second International Consultation on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights at Geneva from 23 to 25 September 1996. The Consultation was attended by some 35 participants representing Governments, human rights non-governmental organizations, AIDS service organizations, academia, networks of people living with HIV/AIDS, and United Nations system agencies and programmes.

90. The final document contains concrete, action-oriented strategy guidelines, intended primarily for Governments, regarding the promotion of and the respect for human rights in the context of HIV/AIDS. The guidelines, set out in the framework of applicable international human rights standards, address areas of, inter alia, labour, education, immigration, law review and reform, and the empowerment of vulnerable groups. The Consultation also called for the creation of a special rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights to monitor and receive communications regarding violations of human rights relating to AIDS.

B. Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions

91. The eradication of extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions remains a matter of the highest priority in the protection of human rights. In its resolution 1996/74 of 23 April 1996, the Commission on Human Rights reiterated its strong condemnation for the practice of such executions and demanded that all Governments ensure that it be brought to an end. The High Commissioner pays particular attention to situations of serious concern in this context, and to situations where early action may have a preventive effect.

92. In his interim report to the General Assembly on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions (A/51/457, annex), the Special Rapporteur,

Mr. Bacre Waly Ndiaye, offers an overview of the action undertaken during his years in office. The Special Rapporteur concludes that the number of violations of the right to life has not decreased in the last four years, and that women, children and the elderly have not been spared. Such violations have ranged from death threats, death in custody and due to attacks by security forces, death resulting from armed conflicts to executions imposed after unfair trials. In his report, the Special Rapporteur issues recommendations to strengthen respect for the right to life, calling upon all States to conduct exhaustive and impartial investigations into all allegations of violations of this right, and to bring to justice those responsible. Moreover, he considers that effective measures should be taken to avoid the recurrence of such violations.

C. Torture

93. In April 1996, only one month before the annual meeting of its Board of Trustees, the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture was facing an alarming financial situation. The total amount of contributions received by the Fund was $333,000, whereas the amount requested for assistance was more than $5 million. The High Commissioner therefore made an appeal at the fifty-second session of the Commission on Human Rights urging all Governments to contribute to the Fund. Subsequently, over $2 million was received for the Fund's activities.

94. The Board recommended that $2,535,500 be granted to 96 requests, corresponding to the total amount available. The projects scrutinized provide medical, psychological, social and legal assistance to victims of torture and their relatives. They are implemented by non-governmental organizations and specialized centres located in 60 countries worldwide.

D. Enforced disappearances

95. The systematic practice of acts of enforced disappearance became known in the early 1970s as a phenomenon prevalent in a relatively small number of countries. Since then, it has, unfortunately, spread to many regions of the world, occurring primarily in the context of internal armed conflict and ethnic strife. The Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 1996/30 of 19 April 1996, reiterated its deep concern about that phenomenon and called upon Governments to establish appropriate structures and mechanisms aimed at preventing the occurrence of involuntary disappearances in their countries and at clarifying already existing cases. States should take effective measures to implement the principles of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and to that end take action at the national and regional levels and in cooperation with the United Nations. The technical cooperation programme is available with regard to reform of legislation and training in this respect (see paras. 43-47 above).

E. Internally displaced persons

96. A compilation and analysis of legal norms pertaining to the protection and assistance needs of internally displaced persons was presented to the Commission on Human Rights by the representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons, Mr. Francis Deng (E/CN.4/1996/52/Add.2). This compilation examines the extent to which existing provisions of international human rights law and humanitarian law provide adequate coverage for the protection and

assistance needs of the internally displaced, and also examines refugee law for purposes of analogy. In accordance with the recommendations by the General Assembly and the Commission, the representative is in the process of developing a body of guiding principles, based on the aforementioned compilation, with a view to addressing displacement in all its stages.

97. Ever since it started in January 1995, the High Commissioner and the Centre for Human Rights have participated in the overall process of the Conference on Refugees, Returnees, Displaced Persons and Related Migratory Movements in the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States, which was organized by UNHCR, the International Organization on Migration (IOM) and OSCE and held at Geneva on 30 and 31 May 1996. The High Commissioner/Centre maintained a close working relation with the Conference secretariat by sharing its expertise and providing background materials as well as contributions in the area of human rights and on the specific issues of forced displacement, with a view to ensuring that commitments undertaken under international human rights and humanitarian law standards were accurately reflected in the final document of the Conference. The United Nations human rights programme is contributing to the implementation of the programme of action adopted by the Conference.

VI. THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT AS A HUMAN RIGHT

A. Vision for the right to development

98. The debate on the right to development increasingly focuses on substantive issues. The functions of this right, to which the World Conference attached great importance, and its impact on other rights, are today more profoundly recognized. Following the encouraging pattern of the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights adopted, for the first time by consensus, resolution 1996/15 of 11 April 1996 entitled "The right to development". This was an important achievement, which reflects the commitment of Member States to lend support to the realization of the right to development. It is also a tribute to the work being conducted by the Working Group on the Right to Development which concluded its mandate in 1995. The Commission also decided to establish a new intergovernmental group of experts that would elaborate on a strategy for the implementation and promotion of the right to development.

99. The concept of the right to development should contribute to combating social, economic and political exclusion and alienation. Participation in development should be a vehicle of identification of the individual with the community in which he or she lives. To achieve it, however, it is indispensable that the right to development be put against the background of the triad proclaimed by the World Conference, which embraces: democracy, development and respect for human rights. The right to development is related to all human rights but cannot be identified with the sum of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights or be confused with development itself. As in the case of other human rights, the primary responsibility for its implementation rests with the respective Governments, acting individually and in cooperation with each other. Guided by the spirit of solidarity, international action can and should assist Governments in these endeavours. States, as the principal actors in the realization of the right to development, should guarantee the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms, strengthen democracy and ensure an honest and transparent public administration and an efficient and impartial administration of justice.

100. It is of vital importance to move from a theoretical or political discussion to practically oriented measures. The participatory dimension is an essential component of the right to development and is a means of securing democracy at the national and international levels, improving incomes, health and social services, eliminating poverty and improving the living conditions for all people. This should include the translation of the right to development to the domestic level.

B. Meeting of the High Commissioner with the World Bank and the United Nations regional economic commissions

101. In 1995, the High Commissioner established contacts with the World Bank, which led to consultations between the two institutions held at Washington, D.C., on 24 and 25 July 1996. The idea of cooperation between the Bretton Woods and other financial institutions and the United Nations human rights programme was endorsed by the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights, especially in the context of the right to development. The adoption by the High Commissioner of a comprehensive approach to human rights and the World Bank's focus on sustainable development, including assistance to

human resources, governance and the rule of law, have provided a substantive basis for such cooperation.

102. The purpose of the consultations was to explore, in the context of the programmes aimed at sustainable development, various aspects of possible cooperation between the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights and the World Bank, as well as between the two institutions with other partners, including Governments, international organizations, expert bodies, etc. It was a shared view that the responsible units of the World Bank and the United Nations human rights programme should enter into cooperation in the following areas: exchange of information and cooperation in the preparation of country projects; exchange of expertise with regard to reconstruction and development assistance in the transition to democracy; cooperation with regard to field offices; building of national capacities for governance and the promotion and protection of human rights; human rights education; and cooperation with human rights treaty-based bodies.

103. The main objective of the meeting between the High Commissioner and the regional commissions held in New York on 18 July 1996 was to discuss how the work of the human rights programme and of the regional commissions could be mutually reinforcing, in order to promote effectively the implementation of human rights, including the right to development. It was stressed that the national and international development policies should be enriched by a human rights perspective. This should be done at the national and international levels.

104. The initiative of the High Commissioner to establish closer contacts between the regional commissions and the United Nations human rights programme was welcomed by the participants who expect it to be helpful in bridging the economic and human rights sectors. The participants agreed that consultations and exchange of information should provide a framework for joint or coordinated projects in the field.

VII. UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS MACHINERY

105. The World Conference on Human Rights recognized the necessity for a continuing adaptation of the United Nations human rights machinery to the current and future needs in the promotion and protection of human rights. Emphasis was placed on improvement of coordination, efficiency and effectiveness. The Working Group of the Third Committee created after the World Conference to elaborate on this issue continues its work.

106. The General Assembly entrusted the High Commissioner with the specific responsibility for the reform of the United Nations human rights machinery. He has already undertaken a profound reform of the human rights part of the United Nations Secretariat, which is expected to be completed in early 1997 (see also paras. 118 and 119). The purpose of the overall reform of the human rights machinery is to make it: (a) more effective and cost-efficient; (b) able to act swiftly and to respond appropriately to human rights situations; (c) stronger, through international cooperation in the field of human rights, based on mutual confidence; and (d) more transparent and understandable to the outside world. The High Commissioner has stressed that the adjustment of a given organ or body to the evolving needs remains the primary responsibility of the organ or body in question, to which the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights provides analytical and organizational support.

107. While the reform of the human rights machinery is subject to discussion in various forums, immediate measures are being taken to improve the conditions of work of human rights organs and bodies. The restructuring of the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights will have a positive impact in this respect. New methodology of work, including horizontal operational linkage between various units, new scheme of flow of information, empowerment of staff and decentralization of decision-making and responsibility should ensure that human rights organs and bodies will be better served, both in substantive and technical senses. This approach is preferable not only from the point of view of a sound organization of work but also necessary under current financial constraints, which make it impossible simply to increase resources available to each of the organs or bodies.

A. Commission on Human Rights

108. The fifty-second session of the Commission on Human Rights was held from 18 March to 26 April 1996. A great number of high-level representatives of Governments, the numerous and active participation of non-governmental organizations as well as the close media attention that this event generated, highlighted the growing prestige of the Commission. The Commission was opened, for the first time, by the Secretary-General. The report of the Commission to the Economic and Social Council will be issued under the symbol E/1996/23.

109. The last session of the Commission illustrates the positive trend to consensus in human rights matters. From among 85 resolutions and 14 decisions about 90 per cent were adopted without a vote. It is to be noted that the Commission is functioning more and more as an organ that is reacting to the current and pressing human rights needs around the world. After having held three special sessions (two on former Yugoslavia and one on Rwanda), the Commission, alerted by the dramatic information being received from Burundi, decided to hold a special meeting on the human rights situation in that country. The High Commissioner also organized a panel with the participation of

outstanding human rights personalities to discuss immediate measures to be taken in response to the human rights developments there. The Commission in its resolution concerning the situation in Burundi (resolution 1996/1 of 27 March 1996) called upon the international community to respond to the situation but failed, however, to adopt a decision concerning the financial implications of its resolution.

110. Throughout the debate in the Commission there were several expressions of concern on the need to rationalize the United Nations human rights machinery, including the Commission itself. Some steps with regard to the rationalization of the organization of work and reclustering of the agenda were taken. These endeavours, which receive the full support of the High Commissioner, are expected to be continued.

B. Special procedures

111. Special procedures, which include rapporteurs, representatives, experts and working groups of the Commission on Human Rights and the Subcommission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, have become one of the cornerstones of the international system of promotion and protection of human rights. There are currently 13 thematic working groups or special rapporteurs, and 7 thematic mandates entrusted to the Secretary-General. In addition, there are eight country specific special rapporteurs, two country specific special representatives and two independent experts.

112. Both the country specific and thematic mechanisms have continued to carry out diversified activities for the protection and promotion of human rights. For instance, in 1995, 517 urgent actions were taken concerning over 1,500 individuals. Thanks to increased cooperation from Governments, mission activity is expected to increase during 1996. Increased efforts at coordinating activities among various mandates have been made in the last year in the following areas: (a) joint urgent actions; (b) joint field missions; and (c) joint meetings and consultations in respect to human rights situations of a given region or subregion.

113. The Third Annual Meeting of Special Rapporteurs/Representatives/Experts and Chairmen of Working Groups of the Commission on Human Rights was held from 28 to 30 May 1996. These coordination meetings are organized as a follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action with the aim that the system of special procedures be strengthened and that these procedures and mechanisms be enabled to harmonize and rationalize their work. The holders of the mandates welcomed the High Commissioner's support for their activities and his efforts to enhance coordination and cooperation between them and other parts of the human rights machinery. They requested the High Commissioner to carry out a study on the conditions under which he could intervene with a given country to facilitate the implementation of their recommendations. The Chairperson of the Meeting of Persons Chairing Human Rights Treaty Bodies participated in the debate for the first time. It was stressed that coordination between treaty bodies and special rapporteurs/representatives/experts and working groups should be further increased, especially with regard to urgent actions.

114. The holders of the mandates reiterated their concern about the financial constraints that have an impact on their work. The restructuring of the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights should result in the rationalization of the service for the special procedures system, better coordination of their activities, a greater degree of cost-effectiveness and more interchange between

monitoring responsibilities and technical cooperation activities. The meeting requested the High Commissioner to keep the Secretary-General, and through him the General Assembly and the Security Council, apprised of the activities of the holders of mandates. On the proposal of the High Commissioner, it was suggested that the Chairman of the Meeting meet annually with the Secretary-General.

C. Treaty-based bodies

115. Over the past few years, the treaty-based bodies have taken several steps to adapt their work to evolving needs. To that end, they increasingly focus on important issues that call for urgent action; enlarge their cooperation with specialized agencies, United Nations organs and bodies, regional intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations; and devise new procedures in order to make their recommendations more effective. In that context, the Human Rights Committee appointed rapporteurs for the follow-up of final views on communications; members of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination carried out good-offices missions; regional meetings were organized in cooperation with UNICEF to support the activities of the Committee on the Rights of the Child; and country missions were carried out by the Committee against Torture and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights under their respective mandates. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has also envisaged the possibility of taking early warning measures aimed at preventing conflicts related to racial discrimination.

116. A more efficient implementation of international human rights instruments was further encouraged by the seventh Meeting of the Persons Chairing Human Rights Treaty Bodies held at Geneva from 16 to 20 September 1996. The Chairpersons, inter alia, invited treaty-based bodies to avail themselves of the most recent electronic technics to provide information on international human rights procedures and to raise awareness in public opinion. They further encouraged treaty-based bodies to increase active participation of specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations in their monitoring activities and to develop a constructive relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions and UNDP.

117. With a view to implementing the relevant provisions of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the General Assembly, in its resolution 48/121, authorized the holding of two regional meetings of high-level government officials in Africa and the Asia/Pacific regions. The meeting for the Africa region took place at Addis Ababa from 14 to 17 May 1996, with the organizational and logistical assistance of ECE and OAU. It assembled high-ranking government representatives from 16 States that had not yet ratified, acceded or succeeded to some of the seven principal international human rights instruments. During the meeting, the government representatives discussed and reflected on all aspects of the international human rights treaty regime, including the reporting and implementing obligations of States parties to the instruments, the use of reservations, the identification of obstacles to ratification and the development of strategies to overcome them. They were assisted by experts from treaty-based bodies and senior officials of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Centre for Human Rights. The meeting for the Asia/Pacific region has been rescheduled for technical reasons for the beginning of 1997.

VIII. THE HIGH COMMISSIONER/CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

A. Restructuring

118. In 1995, the High Commissioner initiated a process aimed at restructuring the programme of work and the organization of the Centre for Human Rights. Developed with the full participation of the High Commissioner, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and the staff of the Centre, this process is now in its final stage. On 30 September 1996, a new general structure of the Office of the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights was established. Detailed information in this regard is contained in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Restructuring the Centre for Human Rights" (A/C.5/50/71).

119. The new structure of the Office of the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights will provide a functional framework for integrated and consolidated activities of the Secretariat in the field of human rights. To that end, the restructuring was oriented at three objectives: (a) removal of the obstacles that impeded effective and efficient work, in particular those identified in the reports of the competent United Nations units; (b) setting up a new structure responding to the evolving needs of the United Nations human rights programme and adopting adequate rules and methods of work, both in Headquarters and in the field; and (c) creating a new culture of work, including the opening for cooperation and partnership with other parts of the human rights constituency. The experiences already gathered in the process of the implementation of the programme of change are very positive and confirm that this is a proper way to achieve the assumed objectives.

B. Financing

120. The budget of the human rights programme for the biennium 1996-1997, representing the minimum necessary in order to carry out mandated activities, was approved by the General Assembly. Moreover, in February 1996, in the framework of the system-wide saving measures, the resources available from the regular budget were reduced by $2.6 million both in post and non-post items. That reduction represents approximately 6 per cent of the approved budget. Furthermore, a vacancy rate of 6.4 per cent is to be maintained in both the staff of the Professional and General Service categories. Although these measures cannot remain without negative implications for the work of the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights, serious efforts are being made, also in the framework of the ongoing restructuring to minimize their negative impact on the capacity of action. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that the capability of the human rights programme depends on an adequate and reliable mix of regular budget resources and voluntary contributions from Governments and private entities.

121. The High Commissioner has been charged with a very broad mandate the implementation of which, particularly with regard to country-projects, depends to a large extent on voluntary sources. In his report to the Commission on Human Rights, the High Commissioner stressed that the ever growing demand on his Office to engage in such areas as confidence-building measures, technical cooperation, education, observation and monitoring, etc., cannot be satisfied by the present regular-budget funding and thus other sources must be tapped. In this context, the High Commissioner consistently appeals to Member States and others to contribute generously to his endeavours. The Fund for Human Rights Field Activities, which is a component of the Voluntary Fund for the Support of

the Activities of the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights, has met with great interest and support by Governments. Several countries, including developing ones, have already made contributions to this Fund.

IX. 1998: HUMAN RIGHTS YEAR

122. The year 1998 will be important for human rights. Two years before the dawn of the next millennium, the international community will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of its first-ever proclamation of rights and freedoms of the individual. In 1948, the international community agreed upon the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, which gave rise to a vigorous development of international promotion and protection of these rights. In order to respond to the hopes of the drafters of the Declaration and to generations of its advocates all over the world, the celebration of its fiftieth anniversary should be used for advancement of human rights.

123. The World Conference on Human Rights provided a means for reaching this objective by linking the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration with the five-year review of the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. It requested the Secretary-General: "to invite on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights all States, all organs and agencies of the United Nations system related to human rights, to report to him on the progress made in the implementation of the present Declaration and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, through the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council. Likewise, regional, and as appropriate, national human rights institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations, may present their views to the Secretary-General on the progress made in the implementation of the present Declaration." 2/ The Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 1996/42 of 19 April 1996 on the preparation for the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, requested the High Commissioner to coordinate the preparations for the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration, bearing in mind provisions of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action for evaluation and follow-up.

124. The celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration and review of the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action should provide the opportunity: (a) to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide; (b) to review and assess the progress that has been made in the field of human rights since the adoption of the Universal Declaration; (c) to review the progress made in the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action; and (d) to outline or update human rights programmes to meet current and future challenges. This should be achieved through joint efforts of the international community. Let us call 1998 "Human Rights Year".

125. All sectors of the human rights constituency, Governments, United Nations agencies and programmes, international and regional organizations, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and other parts of civil society, media and private enterprises, are called upon to take initiatives aimed at the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This should be a global movement giving evidence that human rights reflect not only hopes and aspirations but also essential interests and legitimate demands of all people on all continents. The international community should use 1998 to give new impetus to human rights, reflecting the vision of the next century.

126. The High Commissioner will facilitate cooperation between various initiatives aimed at the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the

Universal Declaration. To that end, the High Commissioner/Centre has initiated the United Nations inter-agency consultations that will provide a continuing forum throughout 1997 and 1998. In 1997, the High Commissioner intends to undertake sectoral consultations with regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and others to discuss the preparations for the anniversary. In 1998, the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council will be the United Nations focal points for the commemoration which should culminate on 10 December 1998. The General Assembly at its fifty-first session may wish to adopt a decision convening a ceremonial meeting for that day.

127. The review of the progress in the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action during the first five years since its adoption should include a profound analysis of achievements in and obstacles to the full realization of the recommendations adopted at Vienna. A frank and open debate will be of paramount importance for future efforts aimed at the promotion and protection of human rights. It is useful to identify well in advance which role the Commission on Human Rights, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly should play in reviewing the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. Governments, United Nations agencies and programmes, international organizations and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to launch preparations for the presentation of their reports and views on the progress made in the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, in accordance with paragraph 100 of that document (see para. 123 above).

128. The Commission on Human Rights may wish to undertake in 1998 an initial evaluation of the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. The results of that debate would provide input to the work of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. This exchange would be enhanced considerably if held during a high-level segment of the Commission.

129. The Economic and Social Council, in its decision 1996/283 of 24 July 1996, endorsed the recommendation of the Commission on Human Rights resolution 1996/78 of 23 April 1996 to devote the coordination segment of its session in 1998 to the coordinated follow-up to, and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action as part of the overall coordinated follow-up to major United Nations conferences. This would be an excellent occasion to analyse the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action by the United Nations system.

130. The General Assembly may also wish to carry out in 1998 a comprehensive analysis of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and to consider recommendations made by the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council. Thus, the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly concerning the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action will highlight the activities of all actors involved, including international and regional organizations, that are not parts of the United Nations system, and civil society.

131. A multifaceted and timely preparation of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration and of the review of the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action will produce an important contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights. A spirit of solidarity and cooperation should guide the international community in this endeavour.

Notes

1/ The High Commissioner visited Italy and the Holy See from 9 to 12 October 1995. He visited Indonesia from 2 to 7 December 1995, as reported to the Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/1996/112). The High Commissioner visited Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from 6 to 11 May 1996, as well as Tunisia from 26 to 28 June 1996. Both visits have been reported to the Economic and Social Council (E/1996/87).

2/ A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III, para. 100.